

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001273

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

This will be an historic decree-Hurriyet
40,000 US troops to Turkey, 22,000 to the front-Sabah
Turkish Military Disturbed-Milliyet
AKP Disturbed with Council of Ministers' Decision-Turkiye
US troops arrived before the Parliament Decision-Tercuman
Americans Do Not Trust AKP-Posta
Government Decree Says that Turkey's Security in Danger-
Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

Iraq issue causes trouble for AKP Government-Cumhuriyet
62,000 US troops are coming-Radikal
Iskenderun harbour is like an American Barracks-Zaman
US Arms are for the Kurdish State -Yeni Safak
Kurdish Groups Meet in Northern Iraq: They don't want
Turkish troops-Cumhuriyet
Kurdish Parliament to US: Don't let Turkish Troops in -
Radikal

BRIEFING

Iraq: Turkish papers predominantly focus on the upcoming, yet not scheduled, parliamentary voting which will provide permission for the stationing of US troops in Turkey. The overall situation, however, is being characterized as "very uneasy" for the AKP government. Some ministers, even though they signed the decree that will be presented to parliament, have already voiced their opposition by disclosing their intent to cast "no" votes. Papers also emphasize the declaration of the Kurdish National Parliament meeting, which denounced a possible Turkish military presence in northern Iraq. This is not going to help the AKP government calm the opposition in parliament. Mass appeal "Milliyet" quotes military sources as saying that it might not be the right time for the Turkish parliament to accept an American military deployment because of the obvious anti-Turkish sentiment of the Kurdish groups. Islamic "Yeni Safak" carries a banner headline: "The US will arm the Kurds," and claims that heavily-armed Kurdish groups will use these weapons against the Turkish military following a US operation. This is "part of the US plan" for an independent Kurdish state, Yeni Safak argues.

"Hurriyet" says that the three agreements, i.e. political, military and economic, are virtually concluded and waiting to be signed. They will be signed right after the parliamentary session, in other words, if the decision for deployment is passed. There are still some details to be worked out, but Foreign Minister Yakis and Ambassador Pearson said that significant progress had been achieved. Reports say the remaining two issues involve the question of IMF conditionality on the economic package and the status of Turkomen in Northern Iraq.

Commentaries on the unfolding developments are split. Even in the same paper, writers argued different sides of the

issue. Hurriyet's Emin Colasan accused the government and AKP leader Erdogan of complicating the situation and creating confusion in the country. He blamed the AKP leadership for accepting US terms which he described as "unacceptable." Fatih Altayli, in the same paper, argued that the rejection of the motion should be seen as a no-confidence vote for the administration. Cuneyt Ulsever joined the debate by reminding, though 94 percent of the Turkish people are opposed to war, the deputies who are to vote on the government's motion in the parliament will have to decide what will be in Turkey's best interests.

Cyprus: The visit of UNSG Annan to Ankara is the center of attention in the Cyprus reporting. Papers speculate that Annan discussed his newly-revised Cyprus plan with the Turkish leadership and received positive signals from Ankara. Annan is expected to make his new plan public after presenting it to the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders as he visits the island today.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq
"The fireball"

Fehmi Kuru argued in Islamic-intellectual Yeni Safak (2/26): "The voting at the Turkish parliament, if it passes, will be used by the war-mongering lobby as a pressuring tool against members of the UN Security Council. The lobby is in a serious rush, because the chances for a peaceful settlement are increasing every day. . The government obviously has put the ball in the parliament's court. Yet the Turkish parliament must insist on international legitimacy, and wait for a second UNSC resolution. The war-mongering lobby in Washington should be ignored, and Turkey is capable of stopping this war from happening."

"The post-Saddam situation"
Yilmaz Oztuna wrote in mass appeal-conservative Turkiye (2/26): "The war is not going to take very long. It will be a short war, yet the aftermath will be very long. Turkey will have to maintain its military presence as long as US soldiers remain there, which could be up to 5 years. American soldiers to be stationed in Turkey could also remain for years. Turkey should be prepared for the worst, such as Operation Provide Comfort, which requires parliamentary authorization every three months. . The US will not easily pull out of Iraq after the war. Iraq will be a main base for US activities, will ensure a safe flow of oil, and permit the holding of 'show' elections. Once things are made stable in the eyes of the US, the administration will be turned over to Iraqis, but definitely not to the Baath Party. That means that, in the meantime, Turkey's immediate neighbor will be the US, not Iraq. The US plans will not end there. The US will work to change the administrations in Iran and Afghanistan as well as in Central Asia, Syria and Saudi Arabia, a task which will practically fill President Bush's 4-year agenda."

PEARSON